

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 95 and 125 without estoppel or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and amend claims 84 and 103 and 123, as follows:

1-83. (Canceled).

84. (Currently Amended) A tissue dissector, comprising:

an elongated tubular body having a central axis extending between a proximal end and a distal end and enclosing an endoscopic imaging element; and
a dissecting, viewing and dilating unit removably mounted on the distal end of the tubular body, including:

a transparent distal tip having substantially conical tapered outer walls converging distally with conical symmetry about the central axis from a cylindrical diameter to a blunt end for dissecting tissue, the tip being disposed on a distal end of the ~~unit~~ body to dissect tissue and facilitate passage of the tubular body through tissue under visualization through the tip by the endoscopic imaging element; and

a non-inflatable dilating element ~~disposed spaced~~ proximally a selected length away from the cylindrical diameter of the distal tip and having a ~~substantially olive-shaped~~ an exterior contour that is disposed with rotational symmetry about the central axis and that gradually increases in cross-sectional dimension symmetrically about the central axis in the proximal direction from a distal edge ~~thereof~~ of the dilating element that is spaced the selected length from

the cylindrical diameter of the distal tip to a maximum cross-sectional dimension greater than the cross-sectional dimension of ~~the said distal edge end of the tubular body~~, the dilating element then decreasing in cross-sectional dimension symmetrically about the central axis in the proximal direction to a cylindrical diameter smaller than said maximum cross-sectional dimension at a proximal edge for facilitating atraumatic expansion of tissue following dissection by the tapered distal tip during advance of the tissue dissector through tissue, said selected length of spacing having an outer-dimension less than the maximum cross-sectional dimension of the dilating element and positioning the dilating element within an angle of the symmetrically conical tapered outer walls of the tip to inhibit the dilating element from impeding contact of the outer walls of the tip with a target vessel.

85. (Canceled).

86. (Withdrawn) The tissue dissector of claim 84, further including at least one resilient member positioned on an outer surface of the tubular body near the distal end thereof, and wherein the dilating unit further comprises a mating recess for engaging the resilient member and mounting the dilating unit on the distal end of the tubular body in a snap-fit engagement.

87. (Withdrawn) The tissue dissector of claim 84, further including a lever-actuated locking device formed on the tubular body and the dilating element

including a mating pin and recess for mounting the dilating element on the distal end of the tubular body and enable easy removal.

88-100. (Canceled).

101. (Withdrawn) The tissue dissector of claim 99, further including at least one resilient member positioned on an outer surface of the tubular body near the distal end thereof, and wherein the dilating element further comprises a mating recess for engaging the resilient member and removably positioning the dilating element on the tubular body in a snap-fit engagement.

102. (Withdrawn) The tissue dissector of claim 99, further including a lever-actuated locking device formed on the tubular body and the dilating unit including a mating pin and recess for mounting the dilating unit on the distal end of the tubular body and enable easy removal.

103. (Currently Amended) The tissue dissector of claim 84, wherein the distal tip and the dilating element spaced the selected length from the distal tip are formed as a single unit removably mounted on the tubular body substantially symmetrically about the central axis.

104-122. (Canceled).

123. (Currently Amended) The tissue dissector of claim ~~[[95]]~~ 84 in which the dilating element is resiliently compressible in cross-sectional dimensions.

~~124-125.~~ (Cancelled).